



**DECISION AND STATEMENT OF REASONS OF PETRA HENNIG MCFATRIDGE LEGAL
MEMBER OF THE FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL WITH DELEGATED POWERS OF THE CHAMBER
PRESIDENT**

Under Rule 8 of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber Rules
of Procedure 2017 ("the Procedural Rules")

in connection with

Case reference FTS/HPC/EV/24/3624

Parties

Mr Dale Hunter (Applicant)

Mr Grant Jenkins-Irvine, Miss Suzanne Waltham (Respondent)

61B Commercial Road, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0NL (House)

1. The application was made to the First-tier Tribunal (the FTT) on 6.8.24 under rule 109 and S 51 of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 (the Act) using ground 1 of schedule 3 of the Act.
2. The application was accompanied by a Notice to Leave dated 6.4.24 with a date of 29.6.24 in part 4 and stating ground 1 of schedule 3 of the 2016 Act as the ground as well as the email to the tenants with the Notice to Leave attached dated 6.4.24. The applicant further provided a S 11 notice and email sending same as well as correspondence from Harper MacLeod LLP regarding the sale instructions. A copy of the tenancy agreement was

requested by the Tribunal on 30.8.24 and provided on 27.9.24.

3. The FTT wrote on 30.8.24 and 3.10.24 advising the applicant that the Notice to Leave appears to be invalid due to the date stated in part 4 not being calculated in accordance with the legislation. The applicant was encouraged to consider the position and to advise whether they intended to withdraw the application.
4. On 1.9.24 the applicant wrote confirming that the date was incorrect but stating that the tenants wish to be issued with an eviction notice so they can take that to the Council. Email correspondence from the letting agent to that effect was provided.
5. The matter was not addressed further after the letter from the Tribunal dated 3.10.24, which had explained that the Tribunal did not have discretion in this regard.
6. The file documents are referred to for their terms and held to be incorporated herein.

DECISION

7. I considered the application in terms of Rule 8 of the Procedural Rules. That Rule provides:-

"Rejection of application

8.—(1) The Chamber President or another member of the First-tier Tribunal under the delegated powers of the Chamber President, must reject an application if –

(a) they consider that the application is frivolous or vexatious;

(b) the dispute to which the application relates has been resolved;

(c) they have good reason to believe that it would not be appropriate to accept the application;

(d) they consider that the application is being made for a purpose other than a purpose specified in the application; or

(e) the applicant has previously made an identical or substantially similar application and in the opinion of the Chamber President or another member of the First-tier Tribunal, under the delegated powers of the Chamber President, there has been no significant change in any material considerations since the identical or substantially similar application was determined.

(2) Where the Chamber President, or another member of the First-tier Tribunal, under the delegated powers of the Chamber President, makes a decision under paragraph (1) to reject an application the First-tier Tribunal must notify the applicant and the notification must state the reason for the decision."

8. After consideration of the application, the attachments and correspondence from the Applicant, I consider that the application should be rejected in terms of Rule 8 (c) of the Rules of Procedure on the basis as the Tribunal has good reason to believe that it would not be appropriate to accept the application.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Relevant Legislation

Rules of Procedure:

Rule 109. Where a landlord makes an application under section 51(1) (for an eviction order) of the 2016 Act, the application must—

(a)state—

(i)the name, address and registration number (if any) of the landlord;

(ii)the name, address and profession of any representative of the landlord;

(iii)the name and address of the tenant [\[F72](#)(if known)]; and

(iv)the ground or grounds for eviction;

(b) be accompanied by:

- i. evidence showing that the eviction ground or grounds has been met
- ii. a copy of the notice to leave given to the tenant as required under section 52(3) of the 2016 Act
- iii. a copy of the notice given to the local authority as required under section 56 (1) of the 2016 Act

1. The application was made on ground 1 of schedule 3 of the Act and would require, in terms of S 52 (3) of the Act, to be accompanied by a Notice to Leave and in terms of S 56 by a Notice to the Local Authority. The FTT considers that the meaning of this section is that the Notice to Leave has to be a valid Notice to Leave. The same requirements are also stated in rule 109 (b) (ii) , which is the rule under which the application is made.
2. The Applicant states the Notice to Leave was served on the Respondent by email on

6.4.24. For the grounds stated in the application, which are grounds to which S 54 (3) does not apply, the notice period in terms of S 54 (2) is 84 days. The date to be entered into the Notice to Leave, if accepting the notice was served on 6.4.24, should have been 2.7.24, this being calculated on the basis of a 84 days notice period and stating the date after the expiry as the date when proceedings could first be raised as required in terms of S 62 (4) of the Act.

3. Paragraph 10 of schedule 1 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, which allowed the Tribunal discretion to deal with wrongly calculated periods in a Notice to Leave has been repealed by the Coronavirus (Scotland) Acts (Early Expiry of Provisions) Regulations 2022.
4. The legislation sets out explicitly the dates and periods which have to be observed to create a valid Notice to Leave. This is further described in detail in the guidance notes on the Notice to Leave. A tenant, having so been advised, must then be able to rely on the accuracy of the information provided in the Notice to Leave. The date stated on the notice is not the correct date but a date 3 days prior to the correct date. The calculation overlooks the correct notice period for a notice issued on the grounds in question and the provisions of S 62 (5) regarding the addition of 48 hours service period to the calculation of the date where service is achieved by email or mail and of S 62 (4) of the Act, which states: *“(4)The day to be specified in accordance with subsection (1)(b) is the day falling after the day on which the notice period defined in section 54(2) will expire.”* The notice stated a date which only takes into account the actual 84 day notice period.
5. The Tribunal has considered whether S 73 of the Act may be applicable in this case to assist the applicant. This states: (1) An error in the completion of a document to which this section applies does not make the document invalid unless the error materially affects the effect of the document.
6. In the Tribunal’s view, the word “effect” in section 73 (and in the explanatory note) denotes the effect the notice is intended to have if it is completed without error. It follows from section 62(1)(b), (c) and (d) that a notice to leave completed without error will give the tenant certain information, namely: 1. the day on which the landlord under the tenancy in question expects to become entitled to make an application for an eviction order to the FTT, being the day after the notice period

expires (section 62(1)(b)). This date is stated in part 4 of the prescribed form, in which the tenant is expressly advised that “An application will not be submitted to the Tribunal for an eviction order before [the date]”, 2. The eviction ground on which the landlord intends to seek an order (section 62(1)(c)), which is indicated by ticking the appropriate box in part 3 of the prescribed form, 3. Details and evidence of the eviction ground (section 62(1)(d) and part 3 of the prescribed form, 4. The tenant’s details (section 62(1)(d) and part 1 of the prescribed form), 5. The name, address and telephone number of the landlord or his agent (section 62(1)(d) and part 2 of the prescribed form). All these parts of the form require to be completed.

7. In the Tribunal’s view, an error in completion “affects the effect” of the notice to leave if, as a result of the error, the notice does not give the tenant that information. In this case, the error clearly “affects the effect” of the notice to leave, because a correct notice would have informed the Respondent of the correct date on or after which an application to the Tribunal could be submitted. That was not done.
8. The notice should, at the very least, correctly inform the tenant of the “why” (the statutory ground) and the “when” of the proceedings that the landlord anticipates raising.
9. To state an earlier date than the date on which, in terms of the Act, the landlord is entitled to raise proceedings is not, in the view of the Tribunal, “an obviously minor error” which could then be dealt with in terms of S 73 of the Act by the Tribunal. It is an error which causes the notice to fail in achieving one of its fundamental purposes.
10. For these reasons, the Tribunal finds that, in terms of section 73, the error of stating “29.6.24” in part 4 of the notice to leave materially affects the effect of the notice and makes it invalid. It is not a “Notice to Leave” meeting the requirements stated in S 62. Therefore, the document which accompanied the application to the First-tier Tribunal was not, for the purposes of section 52(3), “a copy of a notice to leave”, and accordingly, given section 52(2)(a), the Tribunal cannot entertain the application.
11. The Tribunal considered whether S 52 (4) of the Act could be of assistance to the Applicant. All S 52(4) allows is to consider an application made in breach of S 54 if it considers it is reasonable to do so. However, stating the wrong date in the Notice to Leave is not a breach of S 54 but a breach of S 62 (1) (b), which prescribes the information to be included in the Notice to Leave. Had the Notice to Leave stated the

correct date but had the application been made before that date, then the Tribunal could have considered whether it would have been appropriate to consider the application made e.g. due to time pressure because of antisocial behavior. S 54 relates, as the title states, to “Restriction on applying during the notice period” and it is only a non compliance with that which the Tribunal has discretionary power to consider. The breach in this case is not of S 54 but of S 62. The Tribunal has no discretionary power to entertain this application as the date stated in the Notice to Leave had been wrongly stated in terms of that provision. As stated above, the only other power potentially applicable, that in S 73, does not apply in this case. Whether or not the tenants in fact wish to be issued with an eviction notice does not alter the legal requirements of a valid application.

12. The application does not meet the lodging requirements. The FTT had raised the matter clearly with the applicant and offered the him the opportunity for further representations but this was not forthcoming.
13. It would not be appropriate for the FTT to accept an application that does not meet the lodging requirements for the type of rule under which it is made. The application is accordingly rejected.
14. For the avoidance of doubt it should be stressed that this decision does not prevent the applicant from making a fresh application once all requirements as set out in the rules of procedure and the Act are met.

What you should do now

If you accept the Legal Member's decision, there is no need to reply.

If you disagree with this decision:-

An applicant aggrieved by the decision of the Chamber President, or any Legal Member acting under delegated powers, may appeal to the Upper Tribunal for Scotland on a point of law only. Before an appeal can be made to the Upper Tribunal, the party must first seek permission to appeal from the First-tier Tribunal. That party must seek permission to appeal within 30 days of the date the decision was sent to them. Information about the appeal procedure can be forwarded to you on request.

Petra Hennig McFatridge

Legal Member

29 October 2024